

to speak to the students with whom he had been corresponding.

But just as damaging as the disrespect shown to Sergeant Richardson was the impact of this disrespect on the 6th grade students who were waiting to welcome this veteran.

They witnessed their Principal kick a Marine just back from the front off school property, giving our children a real-life lesson in disrespecting our military.

We have a lesson to teach at Anna White Carson Middle School—and across this country. That lesson should be that disrespect for America's service men and women by public officials will simply not be tolerated by the people of this country.

But before we scream too loudly about the speck in the eye of Greene County public schools, we need to take a look at the log in the eye of this Congress.

Senator DICK DURBIN of Illinois stood on the floor of our Senate and compared our military prisons to those of Nazi Germany.

Members of this Congress have whined about whether a book was mistreated at Guantanamo, while the comrades of those Guantanamo prisoners cut the heads off innocent, unarmed, civilian prisoners in their custody.

Any reasonable person can see that comments such as these plant seeds of disdain against America, here and abroad.

Are these comments and actions against our military forces now actually encouraging new attacks by our enemies in London and Baghdad?

Mr. Speaker, we cannot win this war if we continue to allow a handful of public officials to undermine our efforts with irresponsible comments and actions without paying a price—here and all across our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 18, 2005

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately today, July 18, 2005, I was delayed at O'Hare Airport due to severe thunderstorms in between Chicago and Washington, DC. I was stuck on the runway for hours and unfortunately I was unable to arrive in Washington before the votes occurred on H. Res. 328 (Rollcall No. 380), H. Con. Res. 175 (Rollcall No. 381), and H. Res. 364 (Rollcall No. 382). Had I been here to cast my votes, I would have voted "aye" on these three bills and wish the RECORD to reflect as such.

H. Res. 328 recognizes the 25th anniversary of the workers' strikes in Poland in 1980, starting a chain of events that helped destroy the communist rule of Poland and the Soviet Union. The courage and strength of those workers showed the world that democracy can, will and must be allowed to flourish. The freedoms these workers strived for and vision that helped create the Solidarity Trade Union are freedoms that are fundamental to every human being and I rise today to honor these workers and the courage that they showed. May their example show other oppressed citizens throughout the world that there is hope and freedom.

H. Con. Res. 175 expresses the sense that Congress recognizes and honors African de-

scendants in the Americas for their contributions to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of the countries in the Americas, particularly in Latin American and Caribbean societies. It recognizes that as a result of their skin color and ancestry, African descendants in the Americas have wrongfully experienced economic, social, and political injustices. For far too long these injustices have continued and this bill is a great show of Congress that we will no longer stand for it and we must continue to promote ways to destroy barriers and racial injustices that divide our citizens and the citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean. I rise in strong support of this resolution.

H. Res. 364 commends the continuing improvement in relations between the United States and the Republic of India. With Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Washington this week to meet with the President and address us in a joint session of Congress, I can think of nothing better than to recognize the relations our two countries have recently been fostering. I would like to take this time to welcome Prime Minister Singh and look forward to working with him to see that our relations with him and his country continue to progress.

Mr. Speaker, thank you again for allowing me to express my support for these three bills as I was unfortunately delayed on my way to Washington.

MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR VETERANS MEDICAL SERVICES

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 30, 2005

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my unwavering support for H.R. 3130, the fiscal year 2005 emergency supplemental for the Veterans Health Administration. We promised to provide medical care to our veterans long ago, and we can not fail them.

Every time I meet with veterans in my district, they ask me why it has become so hard to get quality care at our local Veterans Administration medical center. I know as well as they do that right now, there are more than 50,000 veterans waiting months for appointments at Veterans Administration medical centers around the country, and this problem is only getting worse as more injured soldiers return from Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the President's budget for this year provided only \$106 million more than last year for veterans health care, well below the amount needed to maintain services without a major change in policy. Now, we are faced with a system in crisis, and we must act immediately to repair it.

On June 24th, the Bush Administration admitted that the Department of Veterans Affairs budget for healthcare would need an additional \$1 billion this year in order to continue operating without loss of services. In response, the President requested an additional \$975 million for veterans' health care, which Chairman BUYER and Ranking Member EVANS pledged to provide as quickly as possible. This bill, H.R. 3130, will provide that additional \$975 million and prevent a lapse in services.

I firmly believe all of my colleagues will join me in supporting this bill, as we must keep the promise we made to our veterans. I hope that this legislation will be sent to the President for his signature as soon as possible.

Even as I am proud to express my strong support of this bill, I remain concerned with the state of veterans' health care in our country. I am pleased that we will pass today a vital emergency supplemental for that system, but I am also extremely troubled that the Veterans Health Administration had this budget shortfall in the first place. The state of veterans health care funding is extremely disappointing, especially given the fact that this entire problem could have been prevented. Instead, it occurred because the Republican leadership has repeatedly denied efforts by Democrats to fund VA healthcare at an appropriate level, claiming that the budget for fiscal year 2005 was more than adequate to serve the rapidly increasing veterans population.

Over the past two years, Democrats in the House have repeatedly stood with America's veterans in the fight to increase funding for veterans' health care. Meanwhile, Republicans have chosen other priorities. Consequently, we do not know when these vital funds will reach this system which is already in crisis. We sought to add \$1.2 billion for veterans' health care on the \$82 billion Iraqi supplemental, which was denied. We tried to provide a \$2.5 billion increase over the President's budget for veterans' health care and Republicans voted no. As recently as June 24th, House Republicans voted to block consideration of amendments offered by Democrats to add the needed funds for VA health care. This obstruction is outrageous, unacceptable, and has led to the shortfall we face today.

Mr. Speaker, I call on the House Republican Leadership to stop their attempts at budget gimmickry and deliver the necessary \$1.5 billion to the VA immediately. Our veterans chose to answer the call of duty to their Nation without hesitation, dedicating themselves to the preservation of freedom, liberty and the security of others no matter the risk. On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a Nation, it must be our pledge that we leave no veteran behind. We must honor their service to our grateful Nation and provide our veterans with the benefits they deserve.

IN HONOR OF THE VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL JERSEY HOSPICE PROGRAM

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 18, 2005

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the men and women of the Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey Hospice Program, who are celebrating their 25th Anniversary this year.

Founded in 1980, the VNACJ Hospice Program has provided compassionate, quality care to those who are reaching the closing chapter of their lives. The many doctors, nurses, social workers, pastoral counselors, and volunteers at the VNACJ work together as teams. These teams collaborate with the patient's own physician to decide proper courses